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McDowell Hall or "Great Hall"  
St. John's College  
Annapolis  
Anne Arundel County  
Maryland

PHOTOGRAPHS

ALICE BODIN  
FEB 1977

Addendum to

St. John's College, McDowell Hall  
(Great Hall) (Bladen's Folly)  
College Avenue  
Annapolis  
Anne Arundel County  
Maryland

HABS. No. MD-291

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

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ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE Maryland	COUNTY Anne Arundel	TOWN OR VICINITY Annapolis
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) St. John's College, McDowell Hall		HABS NO. MD-291
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Great Hall; Bladen's Folly		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) College Avenue		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1742-1789	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Simon Duff	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Originally constructed in 1742, by Governor Thomas Bladen, as the Governors Mansion, the building project overstepped its budget and was finally acquired in 1784 by the newly chartered St. John's College. St. John's completed the building and renamed it in honor of the college's first president.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE) Georgian		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick, laid in all-header and Flemish bonds on the facade, Flemish bond on the rear facade and English bond on the ends.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Three stories above an elevated basement; rectangular; about 51'x72'; large central hall, 3 bays wide and 2 stories high, extending from front to rear, and small central (see data p.2)		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE The central 3 bays of front and rear facades project as pedimented pavilions; molded brick belt course at second floor level; plain belt course at third floor level; hipped roof with pediments at center of each side; central wooden cupola (modern), whose base is octagonal, with a circular open belfry with 8 columns, dome and finial; pedimented wooden porch at main entrance; 1-bay sandstone porch with modified Greek Ionic columns and entablature (NE end); 1 bay porch (NW facade); brick stoop with sandstone steps (SW end).		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Administrative offices, classrooms		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE The Maryland Legislature authorized Bladen to buy four acres of land and build 'a dwelling house', the cost not to exceed £4000. Bladen had already overrun the budget by £2000 by the time the Legislature abandoned the project in 1744. The abandoned project was thereafter called "Bladen's Folly". (see data p.2)		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) Archives of Maryland XLIV, pp. 524-525. Brock, Alonzo. "Journal of William Black," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 1877, p.128. (see data page 2)		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Eleni Silverman, Historian, HABS from reports by Florence Dunbar (Oct.1964) and Harley McKee (Aug.1964).		DATE 3/15/84

SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS (CONT'D):

lateral halls which give access to major areas at each corner.

OTHER INFORMATION (CONT'D):

For many years McDowell Hall was the only building of St. John's College, serving as classrooms, dormitory and faculty apartments. In the mid-nineteenth century, McDowell Hall was converted to its present form and used as administrative offices and classrooms on either side of the large assembly room, the Great Hall.

The building was gutted by fire in 1909, but was restored. In 1952, the building again caught fire, but the damage was confined to the basement and the floor of the Great Hall. The original wooden beams of 1744 were severely damaged and had to be replaced by steel beams.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION (CONT'D):

Burnaby, A. Travels Through the Middle Settlements of North America, in 1759 and 1760, London, 1798.

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Gary, Joy. "Patrick Creagh of Annapolis," Maryland Historical Magazine, XLVII, #4, pp310-326.

Key, Mrs. "A Notice of Some of the First Buildings With Notes of Some of the Early Residents," Maryland Historical Magazine, XIV, p.262.

Maryland Gazette, Annapolis, Oct. 4, 1960.

Mereness, D.N. Maryland as a Proprietary Province. New York, 1901.

Owings, D. McC. His Lordship's Patronage. Maryland Historical Society. Baltimore. 1953.

Radoff, M.L. Buildings of the State of Maryland at Annapolis, Ann: Hall of Records, 19

Voorhees, Philip. Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of St. John's College. Balt: 1890.

Wheaton, Rodd L. "Housing the Governor in Annapolis, Maryland, 1695-1776." Master's Thesis, University of Virginia, 1970.